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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KATHMANDU 000747

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR SA/INS AND DS/OP/NEA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [CASC](#) [NP](#)

SUBJECT: MAOIST CASUALTIES IN DANG REPORTEDLY HIGH;
COCA-COLA FACTORY IN TERAJ BOMBED AGAIN

REF: A. (A) KATHMANDU 0737

[B.](#) (B) KATHMANDU 0439

[C.](#) (C) KATHMANDU 0209

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: The Chief District Officer (CDO) in Dang told the Embassy that he has seen "hundreds" of bodies of Maoist dead in shallow graves in the vicinity of the April 11 attacks on police and Armed Police Force posts (Ref A). According to local press reports, some of those dead may be villagers conscripted as cannon fodder, possibly used as human shields, in the hours leading up to the attacks. A total of five civilians, including two small children, were killed in recent explosions in two other districts. No injuries were reported after suspected Maoists set off explosive devices for the second time at the Coca-Cola bottling factory in Narayangadh (Ref C). We expect the violence to continue as the Maoists gear up for the general strike called for April 23-27. End summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Ministry of Defense spokesman Tana Gautam has confirmed that the bodies of 54 Maoist insurgents killed in the April 11 attacks on the civilian police post at Lamahi and the Armed Police Force (APF) post at Satbariya in Dang district (Ref A) have been found in the vicinity around the posts. (Note: Maoist combatants typically transport bodies of their dead from battle sites. End note.) Gautam said the number of Maoist dead could rise as the search for bodies continues. (Note: A PACOM assessment team is currently visiting division headquarters in Nepalgunj and may learn further details. End note.) The official casualty count for Government of Nepal (GON) security forces in the attacks has been revised to 10 regular police and 37 APF personnel. Four civilians on a night bus in the vicinity were also killed. Dang Chief District Officer (CDO) Mathur Prasad Yadav told Embassy April 15 that he had been out to the battle sites that morning and estimated he had seen "hundreds" of bodies of insurgents in shallow graves in the forest and along the river bank. He speculated that the Maoist casualty count could reach as high as 500, although he was unable to say exactly how many had been officially counted. The police are still in the process of digging up the graves to determine the number of Maoist casualties, Yadav said.

[1](#)3. (U) According to local press reports, the Maoists impressed local residents of villages close to Satbariya to serve as human shields shortly before the attack. Relatives of the men, who have been missing since April 11, reportedly traveled to Satbariya to see if they could identify any of the bodies discovered in the makeshift graves. Local human rights group INSEC said it has heard similar reports from the field and is sending an assessment team to Nepalgunj to investigate.

[1](#)4. (U) On April 12 an improvised explosive device, presumably planted by insurgents, killed two children in Aakhibhuin, Sankhuwasabha, a remote district in northeastern Nepal. The CDO in Bajura District in northwestern Nepal told Embassy that three civilians in Lanten Bazaar attempting to defuse a pressure cooker bomb, apparently left by Maoists, were killed when the device exploded early in the morning of April 14.

[1](#)5. (SBU) At about 7:45 p.m. April 14 five armed insurgents entered the Coca-Cola bottling plant in Narayangadh in the south-central Terai region and set off an explosive device. No casualties were reported. N.N. Singh, the Managing Director of Coca-Cola in Nepal, traveled to Narayangadh April 15 to assess the damage to the plant. This latest attack marks the second time Maoists have targeted the Narayangadh plant (Ref C) and the third time they have set off explosive devices at a Coca-Cola facility in Nepal.

[1](#)6. (SBU) According to Singh, the Nepali police did not adequately increase the presence of armed police around the plant, despite his own and the Ambassador's requests to do so (Ref B). Singh said he is convinced his plants are being targeted as symbols of corporate America and asked the Embassy to press the GON for augmented security around his Kathmandu and Narayangadh facilities.

17. (SBU) Comment: While we think it is unlikely that there are "hundreds" of Maoist dead, it seems apparent that casualties are higher than initially thought. At this point there is no telling how many of the bodies now turning up in makeshift graves are actual Maoist cadre and how many may be unfortunate villagers impressed into temporary and unwilling service by the insurgents. As the date of the general strike called by the Maoists for April 23-27 draws nearer, we expect the insurgents to increase the tempo of violence in a bid to intimidate the general population into observing the otherwise unpopular shutdown. The Embassy will continue to monitor the situation, and will hold an EAC meeting the day before the strike in order to assess our security posture and review any increased threat to the larger American community.

End comment.
MALINOWSKI